



Rising Stars

Mentoring for Cheetah Development High Potential African Employees

Program Objectives

Cheetah Development's mission is to move 1 billion developing world farmers from subsistence to substance. We will do this through two strategies (1) move smallholder farmers into commercial farming and better livelihoods, and (2) invest in small/medium enterprises in the African agriculture value chain to create demand for our farmers.

This "moon shot" of a mission will require a broad array of business, technical, and interpersonal skills for our employees. Because Africa does not have a large number of entrepreneurs and small/medium enterprises there is a real shortage of "home grown" management talent. Cheetah Development is committed to finding and nurturing talent among our African employees that can grow with us and take increasing leadership roles in our companies. Given this, Rising Star program objectives are to:

1. Systematically identify our high potential African employees that can grow with the organization.
2. Provide one-to-one mentoring relationships to high potential employees that develop their technical, management, and interpersonal skills.

The Process

Select and prepare the mentee

- Cheetah Development management selects employees to enroll in the Rising Stars Program that display these characteristics:
 - Aspiration. The employee has the desire to take on new responsibilities, learn new skills, and exercise leadership.
 - Ability. The employee has fundamental skills that can be built upon and job performance that shows a command of their area of responsibility. They possess innate characteristics that give them the potential to lead.
 - Commitment. The employee is committed to the mission of Cheetah Development and seeks to build a career with the company.
- The mentee and his / her manager create a development plan that contains:
 - An assessment of their job and interpersonal skills
 - Performance goals for their current job.
 - Statement of Aspirations describing the career path the mentee wishes to pursue.

Recruit and prepare the mentor

- Mentors that are a good fit with the developmental needs of the mentee are recruited.
- The mentor reviews the mentee's development plan, resume, and other documents that help the mentor to understand Cheetah Development's social mission and business model.

Build the mentoring relationship

- Cheetah Development facilitates a webinar format orientation with both the mentor and mentee attending to review the mentoring process and expectations.
- The mentor and mentee will meet via Skype, or some other electronic meeting tool, over a 12-month period:
 - Monthly for the first 6 months.
 - Bimonthly for the second 6 months
 - Meetings are expected to be 1 to 1.5 hours, but mentor and mentee can set different meeting length if needed.
- At each meeting the mentor and mentee will discuss:
 - Progress on the development plan
 - Problems or opportunities the mentee has encountered since the last meeting that he/she would like help with.

- The mentee will meet with their supervisor quarterly during the 12-month program to give updates on their progress against the development plan and their perspective on how the mentoring relationship is developing.
- At the conclusion of the 12-month program the mentor, mentee and the mentee's supervisor will have a joint meeting to summarize the mentees progress and create an updated development plan.

Close or extend the relationship

- At the conclusion of the 12-month program, the mentor may exit the program, or may choose to serve as mentor for another 12-month program with the mentee.
- Mentors will be invited to participate in a Vision Trip and have the opportunity to meet their mentee in person in Africa.

Roles and Responsibilities

Mentor Roles and Responsibilities

The mentor:

- Is willing and able to share their skills, knowledge, and expertise. The mentor serves as a teacher, and coach for the mentee.
- Exhibits the personal attributes it takes to be successful in the field.
- Has a genuine commitment to the mentoring relationship and takes a personal interest in the mentee. Prepares for each mentoring session.
- Values ongoing learning and growth in the field. They are up to date in their field and devote themselves to their own professional development.
- Gives objective and constructive feedback. A good mentor challenges the mentee to try new things and stretch, while also giving reinforcement for what they have accomplished.
- Values the opinions and views of the mentee. The effective mentee knows the best mentor-mentee relationships are a two-way street with learning going in both directions.
- Appreciates the particular challenges and environment of operating a business in Africa.
- Time commitments. Assume 1 hour mentoring meetings with one-half hour pre-meeting preparation for 9 meetings over 12 months plus 1 hour orientation meeting and a 1-hour wrap-up meeting for a total of 16 hours.

Mentee Roles and Responsibilities

The mentee:

- Prepares for the mentoring session by reviewing his/her development plan and noting problems or questions they want to discuss with the mentor before the mentoring session.
- Taps into the mentor's management skills as well as their technical skills. For example, ask for the mentor's help to think through how to manage a difficult employee, communicate your ideas better, or be considered for a new position with the company.
- Puts into practice the suggestions the mentor gives you during the mentoring session.
- Is honest with the mentor about your strengths and weaknesses and the problems you face in your job.
- Doesn't expect the mentor to solve all the mentee's problems. Seek out the mentor's ideas, but the mentee also offers his/her own.
- Doesn't take the mentor's constructive criticism personally.
- Time commitments. Assume 1 hour mentoring meetings with one-half hour pre-meeting preparation for 9 meetings over 12 months plus 1 hour orientation meeting and a 1-hour wrap-up meeting for a total of 16 hours.

Skills and Experience Needed from Mentors

- Business function skills: accounting, finance, HR, IT, manufacturing, sales and marketing, supply chain
- Industry experience: agribusiness, farm management, food processing, retailing, transportation

To Explore Becoming a Mentor to a Rising Star

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